

# The State of Children's Dental Health: Making Coverage Matter

## Connecticut

# A

2011 GRADE

**Connecticut** meets six of the eight policy benchmarks for strengthening children's dental health. The state meets all the same benchmarks that it did last year, although Medicaid payments slid from 86.5 to 78.5 percent of dentists' median fees.

Oral health and children's advocates are exploring the possibility of expanding the dental workforce. A bill to authorize Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioners was introduced this legislative session,<sup>1</sup> and the Connecticut Dental Association is considering a demonstration project based on the Alaska Dental Health Aide Therapist model.<sup>2</sup>

### HOW WELL IS CONNECTICUT RESPONDING?

2011: **A**

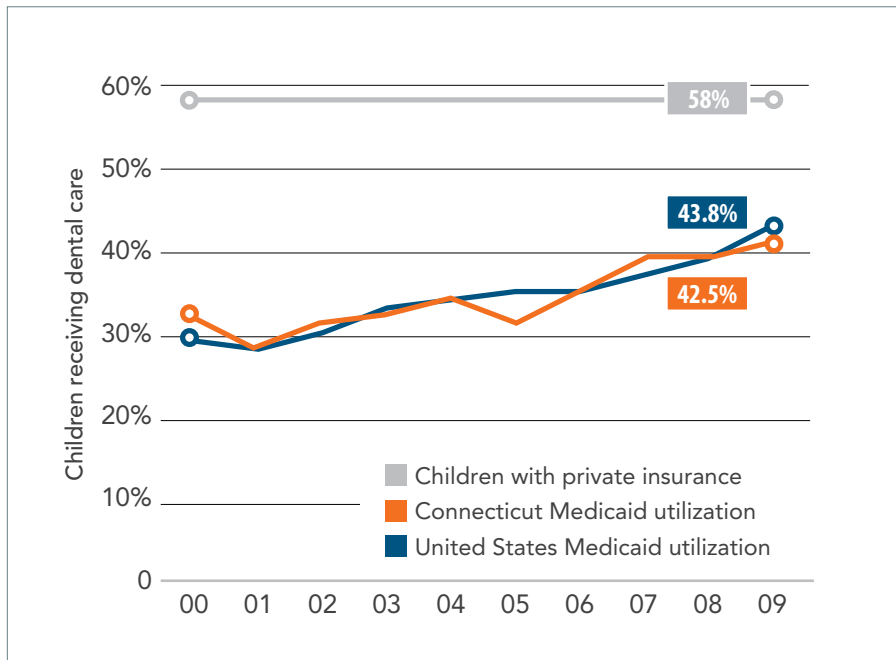
2010: **A**

DATA YEAR	MEASURED AGAINST THE NATIONAL BENCHMARKS FOR EIGHT POLICY APPROACHES	STATE	NATIONAL	MEETS OR EXCEEDS	MET OR EXCEEDED
2010	Share of high-risk schools with sealant programs	<25%	25%		
2010	Hygienists can place sealants without dentist's prior exam	YES	YES	✓	✓
2008	Share of residents on fluoridated community water supplies	89.9%	75%	✓	✓
2009	Share of Medicaid-enrolled children getting dental care	42.5%	38.1%	✓	✓
2010	Share of dentists' median retail fees reimbursed by Medicaid	78.5%	60.5%	✓	✓
2010	Pays medical providers for early preventive dental health care	YES	YES	✓	✓
2010	Authorizes new primary care dental providers	NO	YES		
2010	Tracks data on children's dental health	YES	YES	✓	✓
<b>Total score</b>				<b>6 of 8</b>	<b>6 of 8</b>

**Grading:** A = 6-8 points    B = 5 points    C = 4 points    D = 3 points    F = 0-2 points

## HOW BAD IS THE PROBLEM?

**Too many children lack access to dental care, with severe outcomes.** One measure of the problem: more than half of the children on Medicaid received no dental service in 2009.



SOURCE: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416.

SOURCES FOR BENCHMARKS: (1, 2, 7) Pew Center on the States survey of states; (3) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; (4) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS-416; (5, 6) Medicaid/SCHIP Dental Association and American Academy of Pediatrics; (8) National Oral Health Surveillance System.

1. Connecticut General Assembly, proposed bill 5616. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/TOB/H/2011HB-05616-R00-HB.htm> (accessed February 11, 2011).

2. L. Harrison, "Conn. dentists vote to try dental therapists," Dr. Bicuspid, January 12, 2010 <http://www.drbuspid.com/index.aspx?sec=sup&sub=pmt&pag=dis&ItemID=303614> (accessed February 11, 2011).